



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 20, 2004

For Information Contact Public Affairs

SANDY RAYNOR

Telephone: (602) 514-7625

Pager: (602) 356-5318

US ATTORNEY ANNOUNCES 90-DAY AMNESTY FOR THE RETURN OF SPECIFIC INDIAN OBJECTS

PHOENIX - U.S. Attorney Paul Charlton announced today that the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona, in cooperation with the U.S. Attorneys in Colorado, New Mexico and Utah, has launched *Restore and Respect Heritage*, a campaign which will run through the summer to target the return of vital Indian tribal objects and to provide public education about the importance of preserving of our unique Southwest culture and heritage.

Between May 20 and August 18, 2004, amnesty from federal prosecution will be granted to those individuals who return certain, specific items of Indian cultural patrimony. Tribal leaders from around the state, as well as representatives from various federal and tribal agencies were on hand to support this campaign. "Without the recovery of these sacred objects, the affected tribes are not able to practice ceremonies and to continue the teachings of their forefathers. We seek to recover these items for the benefit of the tribe and our nation. Therefore, when this offer ends on August 18, 2004, the US Attorney's Office will join with our law enforcement partners to

-MORE-

identify, apprehend and prosecute those responsible,” said Paul Charlton, U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona. Cultural patrimony are those objects belonging to Indian tribes that have a continued historical, traditional and cultural importance central to the American Indian group or culture itself, rather than property owned by an individual Indian. Often, these objects are necessary to conduct ceremonies. The inability to recover these items will ultimately result in the extinguishment of whole portions of Indian tribal culture.

Numerous private and public museums, as well as federal and tribal land management agencies in Arizona [Utah, Col, NM] will gladly accept these items - no questions asked. Upon receiving the items, they will be returned to the appropriate Indian tribe. The Bureau of Indian Affairs has established a toll free number to answer questions about this amnesty initiative. Anyone with information or questions is encouraged to call 1-800-242-ARPA (2772).

Also included in the *Restore and Respect Heritage* campaign were reminders from those present about the importance of preserving archeological resources on federal and tribal lands. “It is from the roots of our ancestors that the Community today places a tremendous value on the protection and preservation of significant resources. Simply put, these resources are who we are,” said Richard P. Narcia, Governor of the Gila River Indian Community.

Archaeological resources are not confined to Native American cultures and in some cases, can be the only means of discovering important information about our nations’ history, migration patterns, and early inhabitants. Francis McManamom, Chief Archeologist for the National Park Service said, “The archeological record is nonrenewable. What resources we currently have are all we will ever have; once lost they are gone forever.” Federal and tribal land managers present reminded the public that having a desire to learn about our past is important and encouraged. At the same time, damaging, desecrating and/or stealing from these federal or Indian land

archeological sites robs the nation of its heritage and history and harsh criminal and civil penalties will apply.

Digital images of specific missing items of Indian cultural patrimony will be available during the amnesty period on the U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona's website at <http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/az/>.

RELEASE: 2004-98

#